

Columbia River Fire & Rescue and Scappoose Rural Fire District
33342 SW Meadow Dr, Scappoose OR
Regular Joint Meeting of the Board of Directors
February 13, 2020 7:00 pm

Regular Meeting: After due and legal notice the Regular Joint Board meeting of the Scappoose Rural Fire District and Columbia River Fire & Rescue Board of Directors was called to order at 7:00 pm by Board President David Graham.

Present: Hans Feige, Kelly Niles, Mark Kreutzer, Kim McLane, David Grant, David Graham, David Sorenson, Ron Cairns, and Andy Krieck.

Absent: CRFR Board Member Gary Hudson had an excused absence.

Others: Chief Hoke, DC Holsey, DC O'Connor, DC Smythe, DC Marks, PIO Motherway, FD Salisbury, FF Dubois, FF Krieck, Lt Anderson, Maria Heath, FF Christiansen, FF Fagan, FF Cole, FF McLane, FF Lehner, FF Weber, FF Brody, FF Fletcher, Lt Heuer, Shelly Booth, FF Pulito, FF Hennigan, FF Goering, FF Kish, FF Maginn, FF Gandara, FF Chaffeur, FF Mathews, EMS Curio, FF Ahlers. FD Nelson had an excused absence.

Changes to the agenda: The CRFR Executive Session on labor negotiations was eliminated, and Board members' comments and Good of the Order were moved before the Joint Executive Session to review the Fire Chief's performance.

Public Comment: None

Local 1660 Comments: FF Maginn stated that about a month ago morale was at an all-time low due to the potential loss of two members' employment and a valued program. He thanked the Board for coming together and coming to an agreement. On behalf of the union, he asked that the Board give careful consideration moving forward on some of the changes that might be taking place. He also noted that the Seattle Stairclimb for the Lung Association is taking place March 8.

Local 3215 Comments: Capt. Cole said that contract negotiations were taking place and they were working well with the Administration and should soon have a finished product ready for the Board.

CRFR Volunteer Association Comments: FF Lehner said academy has started, and he thanked all the Chief officers for the time they put into this organization.

Scappoose Volunteer Association Comments: No comments

Correspondence: None. The Scappoose Board expressed unfamiliarity with this agenda item, and President Feige said it was a placeholder for miscellaneous information and thank you letters that needed to come before the Board.

CRFR Consent agenda: Included in the consent agenda are the minutes from the Joint Board meeting on January 9, 2020, checks 70893-71043 for \$314,819.19 and the financial statement for December 2019. VP Niles moved to approve. Director McLane 2nd the motion.

Director Kreutzer asked why there were two payments to Special Districts Insurance, one for \$105,000 and one for \$70,000. VP Niles said that in the past, he has been told that it was a matter of how the billing cycle fell into place. President Feige said he would ask FD Nelson.

No further discussion. Unanimous vote, motion approved.

SRFD Consent agenda: Included in the consent agenda are minutes from the Regular Board meeting on January 9, 2020 and the financial statement as of January 31, 2020. Secretary Sorenson moved to approve. Director Kriek 2nd the motion.

Director Kriek asked why there was not a check register. Secretary Sorenson explained that the Board had chosen to forgo that, which refreshed Director Kriek's memory. Secretary Sorenson asked FD Salisbury whether she had received any comments or questions about the letter sent to the Budget Committee. FD Salisbury said no one had responded.

No further discussion. Unanimous vote, motion approved.

Reports:

Chief Hoke—said the Seaside SDAO conference last week was excellent and gave needed information about tax increment financing districts established through urban renewal statutes as well as collective bargaining and attorney phone calls. He reported on the South County collaborative meeting with elected officials from Columbia City to Scappoose. They were conducting a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) about the future of Columbia County. Chief Hoke asked them why no elected officials from the PUD or the fire district boards were invited. Chief said it was a good meeting and discussed transportation and other matters. He said negotiations were going well with Local #3215.

VP Cairns asked about the Master Fee Schedule. Chief Hoke said it would include all fees charged by the districts, including new ones like lift assists and vehicle accidents. He said private residents would get 4 lift assists for free and pay \$250 per assist thereafter. Assisted living and nursing home facilities would have to pay \$500 per assist with no free ones. The goal is to have those facilities hire staff and buy equipment to perform their own lift assists instead of using taxpayer funds.

Director Kreutzer confirmed that Chief Hoke meant non-combat personnel when he referenced overhauling R & C rehab in his report. Secretary Sorenson asked about the MOU with Local #1660, and Chief Hoke said a small error had to be corrected before it could be signed.

DC Smythe—President Feige asked about the drop in overall call volume. DC Smythe said this was normal during the holidays because people felt renewed enthusiasm for living longer and seeing family and friends. He said many more calls would be generated by all the new residential housing coming online. CRFR is expected to have 5000 to 5500 calls this fiscal year, with Scappoose at 3000 to 3500.

Director Kriek asked about board responsibilities for Lexipol. DC Smythe explained that the districts were on track to finish it. They are currently starting Tier 4 and there are 5 tiers. Some require union review. DC Greenup is coordinating this.

Chief Hoke explained that DC Pricher was in San Antonio on a Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) responding to the corona virus.

DC Marks said one person has dropped from the academy due to scheduling problems. Graduation will be May 30 or 31, and board members will be invited.

DC Holsey—discussed letter of recognition for care provided at a recent care facility call where the onsite caregiver was deceased. Responders made breakfast, brought medics from Clatskanie and SRFD to help provide medical care to the residents, and located an interim caregiver. DC O'Connor did extensive organizing of resources. The board members all thanked staff and expressed their appreciation.

DC O'Connor—discussed this morning's fire on Chapman Road where responders arrived at 2:45 am. A total of 12 duty crew and volunteers responded, and CRFR duty crew came to Scappoose Station in the middle of the night to provide backfill coverage.

Joint Old Business:

- A. Oversight Committee—President Feige reported that the committee discussed the Matrix report recommendations and timelines.
- B. Matrix Report Acceptance—SRFD. Director Grant moved to accept the Matrix cooperative services study report. Secretary Sorenson 2nd.

Discussion: The Board had no changes. VP Cairns felt that it was largely a waste of money – that without Chief Hoke the Fire Authority option would not have been included, and most of that came from the Lane County Fire Authority. Director Kriek agreed, stating that we paid a lot of money for much unnecessary information. He felt it should have contained more suggestions.

Unanimous vote – motion approved.

- C. Matrix Report Acceptance—CRFR. Director McLane moved to accept the Matrix cooperative services study report. VP Niles 2nd.

Discussion: The Board had no changes. VP Niles agreed with Directors Cairns and Kriek's concerns about wasting money, but the report will still help the boards plan for the future. The boards can share the report with the public to add some validity to their future actions. Director Grant said it puts the demographics financials, history of the IGA and other information all in one place, includes trend analysis and will help the boards move forward. VP Cairns said that it would be possible to implement this under Chief Hoke's leadership.

Unanimous vote – motion approved.

President Feige asked what next? Discussion ensued between the Boards about whether to implement the recommendations in the Matrix report.

Director Kriek said that he is very supportive of and wishes to pursue the Battalion Chief concept, and the Matrix report justifies that. VP Cairns said that we must take significant action in response to the report or end the IGA.

Chief Hoke said he met with the Planning Committee and drew up a plan. He has spoken with Ken Jones, the attorney who wrote the Lane Fire Authority. Mr. Jones is willing to assist with preparing Fire Authority (FA) documents if the boards approve that, and he will do so at a reduced rate.

Chief Hoke explained that an FA is an IGA with a different name. It leaves the two districts in place and establishes an administrative entity to oversee joint operations. It has a board with four members, two from each district. If there is an even vote, that matter would be referred back to the fire district boards. Everything with an ownership title – all buildings and apparatus – stays with the district named on the title. This includes all rolling stock and buildings. The districts will retain budgets for capital expenses and the tax rate in each district stays the same. The balance of district revenues will be transferred to the FA to pay for all personnel and operating expenses.

Chief said that he wants to create a FA that would be effective July 1, 2020, and it would include all the operations currently covered by the IGA. The remaining operations would be transferred to the FA effective July 1, 2021. This phased-in approach provides an opportunity for a test drive before the full FA is in place. If possible, Chief Hoke also wants to transfer the maintenance shop and the single

role EMS by July 2020. Transferring the shop to the FA makes sense because it is working for both districts. Transferring the single role would provide more flexibility in managing this function.

The FA provides more promotional opportunities for line personnel. It saves on management expense so there can be more 'boots on the ground.' Management can specialize, providing operational efficiencies and improvements. There is little to no impact on fire line operations since the districts already work together. Other districts are looking at this, and Special Districts has prepared a draft brochure on the subject for Chief Hoke to refine. The FA will require a public relations campaign to educate everyone.

VP Cairns asked about SRFD capital needs for new apparatus and a fire station, and funding these through a capital option levy. There was brief discussion about the two districts merging and the difference in tax rates. CRFR's rate is \$2.97 per \$1000 assessed value, and SRFD's total rate including the local option levy is \$2.35 per \$1000. This 62-cent difference is the primary obstacle to a merger.

Chief Hoke confirmed that there will be three budgets on July 1, 2020 – SRFD, CRFR, and the FA. The combined total of all three budgets will equal the revenues of both SRFD and CRFR. Each district will pay its own expenses, whether they are budgeted within the district or in the FA.

Director Grant said he agrees with the Matrix report's recommendation to form an FA. However, he expressed concern that Chief Hoke's timeline for implementation is too aggressive. He would rather delay implementation to provide time for Matrix recommendations such as a workshop establishing FA mission and values and better communication with staff and the community. This would increase overall buy-in on the plan and allow a smoother transition. These statements were applauded by some in the audience. Director Grant said he does not believe staff can meet the planned timeline. He would like to take more time in order to avoid the mistakes that were made on the IGA. Director Kriek agreed with Director Grant's concerns about the short time frame for implementation and the need to take more time.

There was discussion about how the two unions would be affected by the FA. Chief Hoke said that they would have to decide among themselves whether to go with one union or the other or create something new.

Director Kriek said he would like to get staff input on this. President Feige said the CRFR board had already talked to staff and he thought that the SRFD board would have done so as well. Director Grant said SRFD had a different culture, one that followed the chain of command. VP Cairns confirmed this. SDAO board workshops had emphasized that the Board only supervised the Fire Chief and not the rest of the staff, so they were discouraged from talking with staff and vice versa. Director Kriek suggested a confidential staff survey and a survey for the public.

The CRFR board members said they did not want to delay Chief Hoke's timeline. Comments included strong opposition to delay and concerns that there would be additional delays beyond that. VP Niles said he has faith that Chief Hoke and staff can implement the FA on the planned timeline.

Secretary Sorenson asked Chief Hoke to explain the July 1, 2021 deadline and the need to make the decision tonight. Chief Hoke said it couldn't be later because July 1 is the start of the fiscal year when budgets begin. If the decision to move forward is not made tonight, there will not be enough time to create the FA, meet local budget law requirements, and address other matters by July 1. He said Ken Jones has prior experience and is ready to assist with the legal paperwork at a reasonable price. Christy Monson, our attorney with the Local Government Law Group, was pleased that she would only have to review and file the documentation because that will make it a faster process.

Chief Hoke said that his concern was that one year from now we would still be here talking about this with very little done.

Director Kreutzer said he agrees with the Matrix recommendations and trusts the staff to get them done. He has experienced many mergers/IGAs previously (Beaverton, Tualatin Rural, Oregon City and West Linn) and knows those changes bring anxiety, which is understandable. However, the mergers combined resources and made the organizations cheaper, faster and more responsive. The FA will help eliminate redundancies and provide better service and buying power. That's what our citizens want from us. Director McLane said that Chief Hoke was hired specifically to accomplish change and do it quickly. Both boards knew that he was a 100-mph guy. President Feige agreed with the other CRFR board members comments.

Director Kriek asked what would happen if SRFD did not move forward with Chief Hoke's plan and timeline. President Feige said that the CRFR Board would probably terminate the IGA. Section 9.2 is clear that the IGA can be terminated with 90 days' notice.

VP Cairns said he agrees with CRFR on that decision. President Graham said he understands both interests, one for a slower process and the other for speed. We all know it's going to happen sooner or later. Director Grant said he was not opposed to the FA, and he also had wanted more aggressiveness in hiring the chief. He said the delay he is requesting will allow more time for preparation and will end with a great FA. He said that an FA is essentially a back-door merger without going to the voters and it was important to take the time to do it right.

President Graham asked the audience for comments, saying that CRFR had spoken to their staff and SRFD would like to hear from theirs.

FF Chauffeur said the applause for Director Grant's statement showed the staff's support for a slower pace. FF Chauffeur felt the current speed was out of control.

Director Kriek said that he has heard only two advantages to the FA from staff – 1) the promotional opportunities and 2) the battalion chiefs to provide better duty officer coverage. That's all they see. We have the IGA in place and there are things we need to fix there. Then we could move on.

Director Grant asked how long other districts had taken to form their fire authorities/mergers. VP Niles said that the last one he knew of went to an FA in less time than we have been in the IGA. Director Grant observed that was somewhat less than 3 or 4 years, but more than 4 months. He said he only wanted one more year. Director Kriek said we should take the time needed to do it right, even if it takes 10 years.

Lt Heuer said that many parts of the FA seem good and they want to support progress. But based on recent events, the staff have concerns about extra instability and instant decisions which have a negative effect on the bargaining unit and the employees. FF Kriek said that the ultimatum the Scappoose Board has given to us adds to those fears.

FF Lehner said look at the room – we're divided. When this started out, we were meshing and working well. Something's happened 4 years down the road, and now it's not working.

President Feige said we appeared to be at an impasse and needed to either postpone the decision or delay the FA implementation.

VP Niles made a motion to enact provision 9.2 of the IGA and terminate in 90 days. Director McLane 2nd.

Director Kreutzer said that before CRFR votes, he would like the SRFD board to write down their concerns because he wasn't sure he fully understood their reasons for wanting a delay. Then those could be discussed and perhaps a resolution could be reached. President Graham said that as the volunteer said, the boards are not meshing. He said we needed to agree on a vision and a mission to help bring us together.

President Feige said they must look out for their own department, and at some point, decide that enough is enough. Director McLane said that 4 years is more than enough. Look at the staff – they are separate.

Responding to that, Ms. Booth said that she would have taken a seat with CRFR staff. However, all those were taken when she arrived. Others also voiced objections to the perception of separateness. Then many CRFR and SRFD staff rose and exchanged places so that the districts' staffs were mixed together.

FD Salisbury said that from her perspective, the difference between the IGA and the FA was just a pile of paperwork. The boards could approve creating the FA shell and only put the IGA agreements inside it. They could leave out controversial matters like the single role function and we could start putting the pieces together. Then there would be an entire year to work on the rest of the FA and make it effective July 2021. Director Kriek explained how prior discussions between board members offered multiple solutions; one of which was the creation of a FA with each district led by a Chief. Director McLane said she didn't want to go another four years before a FA was developed. PIO Motherway shared her perspective that the goal is to serve the community and that each district does that, but in different ways and at different speeds. President Graham asked if people in the organizations were fearful of the change. PIO Motherway said that CRFR is used to change, whereas SRFD has had much less change historically.

Director Grant suggested taking one year to develop a vision statement for the FA and set firm dates toward the establishment of the FA. He is concerned about achieving the product that all members want on a rushed schedule. He suggested delaying the full FA to 2022.

VP Niles asked if the FA would still be on track if the two-year roadmap was kicked back a month.

FD Salisbury explained that moving the timeframe back even one month would place constraints on the budgeting process, saying that time is required to receive a new employer rate from PERS, and notifications would need to be made.

VP Niles pulled his previous motion to enact provision 9.2 from discussion in order to allow Secretary Hudson the opportunity to participate in the decision making.

FD Salisbury asked if another meeting could be scheduled in February. Director McLane asked if FD Salisbury and FD Nelson could begin the budgeting process for the FA, to which FD Salisbury said they would need a decision from the board before proceeding.

Secretary Sorenson expressed his support for the FA, suggesting the Boards move forward with the July 1, 2020 timeline as originally presented, realizing that in Feb. 2021, they may decide to delay if progress to that date doesn't meet the needs of the Districts. Director Kriek asked if the boards must approve the FA prior to developing the budget for the FA. Secretary Sorenson affirmed that the budget for 2020 would have to be developed only after the approval of the FA. FD Salisbury reminded board members that additional pieces could be added to the FA as the Boards are ready, but the framework and legal entity would be established. Chief Hoke reminded board members of the need to develop the FA in order to get the budget process started.

DC Smythe expressed that Division Chiefs working 90 hours per week needs to see improvement. He reiterated the need to decide from a leadership perspective, as motivating the front-line employees is difficult without clear direction.

Mayor Cole asked how he is to sell the idea of the FA to his constituents. He suggested the FA benefits SRFD more than CRFR. Director Kriek expressed that he struggles to explain the benefits of a FA to his constituents as well. DC Marks explained that increased manpower is a direct benefit to

operating under a FA. DC Smythe reviewed the call history and manpower ratio, expressing again the need for additional personnel and Battalion Chiefs.

VP Cairns expressed his vote to move ahead with the FA. Director Grant wants a workshop to develop a vision for the FA. This would need to be scheduled quickly, due to the budget timeline. Director Kriek supports the notion of a workshop. Chief Hoke suggested the need for full board support in order to move forward with the FA. The FA allows for reduced overhead costs without changing tax rates in either district.

President Graham asked DC Smythe if delaying the FA one year would be a workable solution. He responded that the Division Chiefs would not see relief for another year. Delaying would benefit SRFD more than CRFR.

President Graham asked Chief Hoke if the FA is necessary prior to hiring Battalion Chiefs. Chief Hoke responded that the BC positions are critical to the FA success. The additional positions are critical. Director Kriek asked if current employees would move into the BC positions, and eventually more firefighters would be hired to fill the vacancies created. FD Salisbury said they could begin the paperwork for incorporation with the hope to move different pieces, like Operations or the maintenance facility, under the FA in 2021. The boards need to vote now to begin the process.

FF Kriek asked President Graham to restate his question, saying he thought he asked, "Do we need the FA to hire Battalion Chiefs?" Chief Hoke responded with, "No, we need money." President Graham asked where the money for the BC positions would come from. Chief Hoke said they would come from SRFD and CRFR budgets. FD Salisbury suggested looking at SRFD's budget with FD Nelson to find areas where monies can be moved to pay for the BC positions.

Director Grant made a motion to move Chief Hoke's timeline out one year to 2022 for full implementation. Director Kriek seconded. Directors Grant and Kriek voted in favor of the motion. Directors Sorenson, Cairns, and President Graham opposed.

Secretary Sorenson moved to approve the original 2-year timeline with implementation beginning 2020. VP Cairns seconded. Directors Sorenson, Cairns, and President Graham voted in favor. Directors Kriek and Grant opposed. The motion carried.

President Feige asked for clarification that SRFD's board voted to approve with the FA beginning in 2020 and full implementation in 2021. President Graham confirmed.

Director Kreutzer moved to approve the original 2-year timeline with implementation beginning 2020. VP Niles seconded the motion. President Feige expressed Secretary Hudson's wishes to move ahead as planned. VP Niles expressed concern about lack of buy-in among employees as well as the benefit to constituents. He suggested that the only way he would move forward with the FA would be if a workshop were scheduled immediately to address Director Grant's concerns. Motion carried unanimously.

CRFR Old Business:

- A. Water Line Leak Repair: St. Helens Station water line leak repair invoice for \$14,084.13. This is for a 3-inch line, and they asked for an adjustment from the water company. Director Kreutzer moved to approve the invoice. VP Niles seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- B. Engine Change Order: DC Smythe explained that additional changes to the new engines came from the apparatus committee. Safety items were added. Information on maintenance costs on current engines was presented to the members, separated by district. SRFD's maintenance costs appear to be smaller because some of the

maintenance costs were completed out of the county and there is no record of the costs. Director Kreutzer inquired about line items on the change order, specifically a deck gun and black paint. Director Kreutzer moved to approve the Engine Change Order at a cost of \$68,788. Director McLane seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

- C. Medical Services Compliance Specialist (MSCS) Recruitment: DC Holsey discussed the job description for the MSCS position. Director McLane shared her concern with the AA degree as a minimum qualification. DC Holsey explained the purpose of this was to widen the applicant pool, saying they prefer a BA or MA. DC Holsey said he, Chief Hoke, and FD Nelson worked together to develop the job description. This position would begin this fiscal year. Director Kreutzer moved and VP Niles seconded the motion to approve the recruitment and hire of the MSCS position. The motion carried unanimously.

SRFPD Old Business:

- A. Engine Change Order: President Grant moved to approve the Engine Change Order for \$34,394. Secretary Sorenson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- B. Committee Reports: Planning Committee —Director Kriek stated his desire to get back to a Planning Committee with a combination of career, volunteer, and administration to plan for large expenditures like the purchase of engines. Chief Hoke agreed and stated this should begin in July, in order to get the FA up and running.

- C. Miscellaneous: None

CRFR New Business

- A. Resolution 2019-20-005 Surplus Property: CRFR has five vehicles to surplus. VP Niles moved to approve the surplus of the five vehicles. Director Kreutzer seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Chief Hoke was asked where the vehicles would go, which he replied they would be sold.

- B. Rainier Bay Heater: Two units in the apparatus bays in Rainier have failed. VP Niles moved to approve the purchase and installation of a new apparatus bay heater at a cost of \$11,192. Director McLane seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

SRFPD New Business:

- A. Resolution 2020-02 Surplus Property: SRFD has three vehicles to surplus. Director Kriek moved to approve the surplus of the vehicles. VP Cairns seconded; motion carried unanimously.

- B. EMS Billing Procedure for Financial Hardship: FD Salisbury explained the Financial Assistance and Claim Review procedure, stating that it was CRFR's current policy. Director Grant moved to approve the procedure; Director Kriek seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Miscellaneous: None

Board Comments: After much discussion, the Boards decided on Sunday, February 23, 2020 from 4-7pm for a Special Board Meeting/Workshop.

Being no further business, the public meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

The CRFR and SRFD Boards of Directors then reconvened at 9:55 pm in Executive Session per ORS 192.66(2)(i), to review and evaluate the job performance of the Fire Chief. No staff or members of the public were allowed to remain.

The Joint Executive Session was adjourned at 10:25 pm. The Boards did not return to open session and no action was taken.

Next regular meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2020 at 7:00 pm at the Columbia 911 Center, 58611 McNulty Way, St. Helens, Oregon